

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A retractor blade assembly comprising:
a fixed blade having a tissue retracting segment extending along a longitudinal axis;
and
an adjustable blade operatively coupled to the fixed blade and linearly adjustable relative to the fixed blade parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tissue retracting segment of the fixed blade, the adjustable blade including a flexible tab, the flexible tab being movable between a first position in which the tab is generally co-planar to the adjustable blade and a second position in which the tab is oriented generally transverse to the adjustable blade, the flexible tab including a projection for engaging the fixed blade when the tab is in the first position.
2. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 1, wherein the flexible tab is biased to the first position.
3. (Original) The retractor blade assemble of claim 2, wherein the flexible tab is generally rectilinear is shape.
4. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 3, wherein a distal portion of the flexible tab is coupled to and formed from the adjustable blade.
5. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 4, wherein the flexible tab is pivotable about the distal portion between the first and second positions.
6. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 1, wherein the flexible tab is configured to move away from the fixed blade when moved to the second position.
7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) The retractor blade assembly of claim 1 ~~7~~, wherein the fixed blade includes a plurality of stops for receiving the projection.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 8, wherein the stops comprise a plurality of teeth aligned longitudinally along the fixed blade.

11. (Previously presented) A retractor blade assembly comprising:

a fixed blade having a tissue retracting segment extending along a longitudinal axis;
and

an adjustable blade operatively coupled to the fixed blade and linearly adjustable relative to the fixed blade parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tissue retracting segment of the fixed blade, the adjustable blade including a flexible tab, the flexible tab being pivotable between a first position, in which the tab is generally co-planar to the adjustable blade, to a second position, in which the tab is oriented generally transverse to the adjustable blade, the flexible tab having a projection engageable with one or more longitudinally aligned stops provided on the fixed blade, the projection engaging a stop when the tab is the first position to fix the adjustable blade relative to the fixed blade, the tab including a proximally facing instrument engagement surface to facilitate adjustment of the adjustable blade relative to the fixed blade.

12. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 11, wherein the adjustable blade includes an opening adjacent the instrument engagement surface to facilitate positioning of an instrument against the instrument engagement surface.

13. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 12, wherein the opening is sized to receive the distal end of an instrument for adjustment of the adjustable blade relative to the fixed blade.

14. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 12, wherein the opening is positioned proximal to the instrument engagement surface.

15. (Original) The retractor blade assembly of claim 11, wherein the instrument engagement surface is oriented generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the fixed blade.

16. (Previously presented) A retractor blade assembly comprising:

a fixed blade having a tissue retracting segment extending along a longitudinal axis;
and

an adjustable blade operatively coupled to the fixed blade and linearly adjustable relative to the fixed blade parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tissue retracting segment of the fixed blade, the adjustable blade including a flexible tab formed from the adjustable blade and having a distal end coupled to the adjustable blade, a proximal end of the flexible tab being pivotable about the distal end between a first position, in which the tab is generally coplanar to the adjustable blade, to a second position, in which the tab is oriented generally transverse to the adjustable blade, the flexible tab being biased to the first position and having a projection engageable with one or more longitudinally aligned stops provided on the fixed blade, the projection engaging a stop when the tab is the first position to fix the adjustable blade relative to the fixed blade, the proximal end of the tab including a proximally facing instrument engagement surface and the adjustable blade including an opening proximally adjacent the instrument engagement surface to facilitate positioning of an instrument against the instrument engagement surface.

Claims 17-33 (canceled)